

Memorandum of Agreement Between The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality And The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) share a commitment to recognize and reward environmental leadership in the protection of air, water, and land. To that end, DEQ created the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program, and EPA created the National Environmental Performance Track program. These voluntary incentive and recognition programs encourage program members to focus on issues important to their communities, to take a creative approach to solving local problems, and to employ partnerships and networking with neighborhood citizens to achieve environmental goals.

DEQ and EPA believe that we can achieve more by working together than by pursuing our goals independently. Coordinating efforts will enable us to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs as we meet the opportunities that will accompany their growth and development. As program membership increases, so do our opportunities to encourage organizations to commit to practices that yield results beyond compliance— and ensure the higher level of environmental protection that DEQ, EPA, program members, and the American public all seek.

1. General Provisions

Through this Memorandum of Agreement, DEQ and EPA commit to creating the best value for our customers; reducing the resource requirements of both the DEQ and EPA staff and the administrative burdens of member organizations; creating the greatest amount of incentives, flexibility, and recognition for program members; and reinforcing and encouraging continual improvement in environmental performance. While encouraging each program to maintain its own identity, DEQ and EPA pledge to:

- Coordinate the application processes of the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) and the National Environmental Performance Track program so eligible applicants can apply to both programs simultaneously.
- Work with facilities to identify ways to streamline and facilitate the application process for both programs.
- Provide to eligible facilities the assistance necessary to apply and be evaluated expeditiously for acceptance into both programs.
- Develop incentives that reduce program members' administrative burdens, such as reduced reporting and expedited permitting, where feasible, in recognition of their high levels of performance.
- Coordinate the delivery of incentives to achieve the maximum environmental benefit and minimize transaction costs.

- Identify for program members a high level point of contact in each program.
- Produce marketing tools and coordinate recruiting and recognition events.
- Identify regulatory innovation opportunities that comply with State and Federal statutes and regulations.
- Communicate the measurable environmental results achieved by the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program and the National Environmental Performance Track programs to the public.

2. Future Commitment

DEQ and EPA will continue to pursue other actions together to enhance our programs and reward program members for their leadership in environmental protection. We will continue to look for additional ways to align our programs so that program members and the environment benefit. Our focus will be to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners as we work to align our program requirements and develop additional means to deliver recognition, flexibility, and incentives to our environmental leader members. We look forward to developing a detailed work plan that further defines how our programs will work together and anticipate a cleaner future for the American, and particularly the Virginia, environment as a result.

This Memorandum of Agreement is entered into this 24th day of April, 2002, and remains in effect unless amended by mutual consent.

Robert G. Burnley
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